Succes or Failure in the City?

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Published in:
Historical Life Course Studies

Publication date:
2018

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To cite this article: Paping, R., & Pawlowski, J. (2018). Success or Failure in the City? Social Mobility and Rural-Urban Migration in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Groningen, the Netherlands. *Historical Life Course Studies*, 6, 69-94. http://hdl.handle.net/10622/23526343-2018-0004?locatt=view:master

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Urban-rural dichotomies in historical demography

VOLUME 6, SPECIAL ISSUE 1
2018

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HISTORICAL LIFE COURSE STUDIES
VOLUME 6, SPECIAL ISSUE 1 (2018), 69-94, published 23-02-2018

Success or Failure in the City?

Social Mobility and Rural-Urban Migration in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Groningen, the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

This article studies the relation between rural-urban migration and the upward and downward social mobility of different social groups from the perspective of the sending countryside and not of the receiving city. It utilizes two datasets regarding people born in the Groningen clay soil region (the Netherlands). By applying a revised version of HISCLASS for social stratification, it compares the social mobility of urban migrants with those staying in the countryside. Analysis of both databases shows distinct social differences in rural-urban migration, with children from non-agrarian rural elite families moving very frequently to a city; whereas, children from farmers and unskilled (farm) labourers were much less attracted by urban centres, despite restricted job opportunities in agriculture. Children from lower managers, skilled and lower-skilled workers in industry and services took an intermediate position. For all social groups (except for children of farmers), male urban migrants had on average a better social mobility performance than rural stayers, whereas for females the differences were rather limited. Children of unskilled workers, who rarely went to large cities, were far more successful than rural stayers. This suggests a positive selection. For Groningen, the findings oppose the pessimistic view of nineteenth and early-twentieth century rural-urban migrants mainly being pushed to the city by local circumstances, although their social opportunities in the countryside were indeed limited. The detailed database shows also that even a temporary movement to the city resulted on average in an improved social mobility performance, an indication that urban migrants of nearly all social backgrounds often accrued extra human capital during their stay in a large city.

Keywords: Migration, City, Countryside, Social mobility, Large databases

e-ISSN: 2352-6343
PID article: http://hdl.handle.net/10622/23526343-2018-0004?locatt=view:master
The article can be downloaded from here.

1 INTRODUCTION

Stimulated by industrialisation and the ensuing modernisation of the economy, nineteenth-century Western-Europe underwent a rapid urbanisation process. Rural-urban migration surpluses had always been of importance for cities, due to relatively high death-rates. This is known as the so-called 'urban graveyard' effect (Lynch, 2003; Williamson, 1990). However, from a rural perspective it had been relatively marginal since in most countries urbanisation-rates were still quite low before 1800 (De Vries, 1984; Malanima, 2010). Although in the course of the nineteenth century a relatively strong fall in mortality in cities occurred due to the disappearance of the urban death penalty (Hardt, 2015). This contributed considerably to their growth. The rapid urbanisation taking place must be mainly attributed to an increase in net rural-urban migration (Jedwab, Christiaensen, & Gindelsky, 2017; Lucassen & Lucassen, 2009; Moch, 2003). Often this migration is explained by referring to large rural-urban wage differences. This creates an urban pull, next to a rural push (Borodkin, Granville, & Leonard, 2008; Lucas, 2004; Lundh & Prado, 2010; Long, 2005). Besides information on the labour market situation of the receiving and sending regions, these studies use census data on a national/provincial level to establish migrants responsiveness to labour market signals. Unfortunately, market signals alone tell us very little about the actual individual determinants (*push factors*) of migration that mainly work at the *micro* and *meso* level (Winter, 2009).

Next to these more general migration studies, Kok, Mandemakers and Mönkediek (2014) observe in their overview regarding the Netherlands (see also Winter, 2009) another dominant trend in migration literature consisting of research on either a local or regional level, such as push determinants of migration flows broken down by gender, age, social class etc. The same difference can be found in studies on the relation between rural-urban migration and intra- or intergenerational mobility. Large scale population studies, based on *matching* individuals in census data allow to see the spatial and temporal extent of migrations (Long, 2005). Unfortunately, census data – due to its static general format – fail to provide enough insight into the complex nature of selection and decision-making processes. However, with the recent rise of the *life course* paradigm, scholars are increasingly gaining more insight into the lives of the population under observation also in respect to migration (Dribe & Svensson, 2008; Puschmann, 2015; Wingens, Windzio, de Valk, & Aybek, 2011). This paradigm results in a growing number of complex explanatory models. Consequently, researchers within the last decades increased their interest in the selection of migrants at the level of the countryside, searching for explanatory variables for such models (Delger & Kok, 1998; Dribe & Svenson, 2006; Lucassen, 2004). This points to the role of communities and family in the process of bridging sending and receiving regions (Lesger, Lucassen, & Schrover, 2002; Wegge, 1998; Winter, 2009), the importance of return and intra-rural migration (Hochstadt, 1999), the role of family life cycles in migration, and other micro and meso determinants that affected migration behaviour at an individual and communal level. In a way, recent trends in rural-urban migration studies owe a great deal to the shift in scientific interest of many demographers, from '*demographic regimes*' to analysing longitudinal micro data in the form of '*life courses*' (Kok, 2007).

In the last decades there is also an increasing interest in the relation between migration and social status attainment in nineteenth-century industrializing Europe. Older literature largely based on the Chicago School of Sociology stressed the problematic situation of rural-urban migrants in the city (for instance Thernstrom, 1973), suggesting that these countrymen were relatively low-educated and low-skilled, and largely forced to move by dismal local circumstances (Puschmann, 2015). However, more recent studies of the impact of rural-to-urban migration show that rural migrants – belonging to any social class other than elites – on average improved their socioeconomic status in the city. Partly this relative success is attributed to a positive selection of urban migrants in the countryside, having better education and being relatively more enterprising than stayers (Dribe & Svensson, 2006; Long, 2005). On more inclusive labour markets these positively selected rural-urban migrants even had chances to outperform the native population (Puschmann, 2015; Sewell, 1985). More general studies supply evidence of a significant association between the number of spatial moves, the travelled distances, and social mobility among the nineteenth-century rural population in North-Western Europe (Hochstadt, 1999; Jackson, 1997; Kok & Delger, 1998; Pooley & Turnbull, 1998). Outcomes of migration were not always positive and could vary strongly depending on migrants' individual characteristics. Rural migrants did not constitute a homogenous group. Their chances on the urban labour market as well as their prospects whether to settle or leave a city after a temporary stay differed among social groups and depended also on selection processes at the level of the sending community (Hatton & Williamson, 1998; Kok, 2004; Kok & Delger, 1998).

However, literature discussing how temporary urban migration impacted the 'collective fate' (Kocka 1984) of rural classes, and especially what had happened to those members of a rural community who after an initial urban stay decided to return to the countryside still seems to be scarce (exception: Neven, 2004). Thernstrom (1973) and Lucassen (2004) suggest that it were usually the least successful urban migrants who were inclined to leave again after a short stay in the city. Hochstadt (1999), however, pointed out that the predominant urban perspective on the history of rural-urban migrants' behaviour during industrialisation gave rise to several faulty hypotheses on their respective 'successes' and 'failures' on the maturing urban labour markets, including the suggestion that urban outmigration was an indication of failure. The ideas of Hochstadt, together with observations made by Mönkediek, Kok and Mandemakers (2015) that rural migration trajectories, next to being determined by work patterns and urban labour market constraints, also has to be understood through the prism of contextual and familial *push* factors, suggests according to us that for some individuals an *'urban move'* served as an intermediate step. These benefits only appeared during the returning phase.

In this article we want to add to this literature by tackling the question of intergenerational social mobility of rural-urban migrants from the perspective of the countryside, using the case of the rural Groningen clay soil region of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. We will restrict ourselves to migration to large cities, as this definitely meant a move to an economically completely different society with deviating opportunities. Much previous research looked at rural-urban migration from an urban perspective, dealing mainly with the characteristics of migrants and their intragenerational social success during their stay in the city (Long, 2005; for Groningen-city: Kooij, 1987; Moch, 2012; Puschmann, 2015; Sewell, 1985; Thernstrom, 1973). The large stress in literature on rural-urban wage-gaps suggests also that it was mainly the lower class that was strongly involved in rural-urban migration. For the Groningen clay soil region, we will test this hypothesis, by comparing the parental socio-economic background of rural-urban migrants with those remaining in the countryside.

Next, assuming that most of the rural-urban migration was indeed more a reaction to rural push of limited or absent local prospects than to an urban pull, it might be expected that rural migrants forced to go to the city had a relatively large chance of downward social mobility. However, if the urban pull factor of larger opportunities was more important in the migration decision (Deschacht & Winter, 2015), it might have been the case that rural-urban migrants experienced relatively more upward social mobility. Long (2005) has found for nineteenth-century Britian that within all social groups with the exception of elites, rural-urban migrants outperformed rural stayers. Unfortunately, however, other research comparing the social success of rural-urban migrants with rural stayers is very scarce, which might be partly attributed to source problems (cf. Puschmann, 2015: 249). Puschmann (2015) also nuances both positions somewhat by pointing at the existence of a U-curve for rural-urban migrants, with downward social mobility upon arrival in the city, and afterwards rising social mobility again.

First, we will compare the social background of rural-urban migrants with rural stayers. Were they coming from the poorest parts of rural society, or were migrants coming relatively more from higher rural social groups having more human and other forms of capital. Next, by comparing the social success of rural stayers with rural-urban migrants from a Dutch case-study, we want to see which of the two opposite propositions might be true. Is movement to the city usually a sign of failure resulting in downward social mobility, or did the city offer better social chances than the stagnating Groningen countryside? Finally, building on the ideas of Hochstadt (1999) and Mönkediek, Kok and Mandemakers (2015) we will also investigate if returning to the countryside was a sign of failure of an individual on the urban labour market (cf. Long, 2005), or that returnees most of the time improved their life in the countryside, due to the human capital previously gained in the city.

As explained, historical migration research until now restricts itself mainly to the analysis of one type of database, either one with many cases but limited possibilities or a small sample of people with very detailed personal information. By concentrating ourselves on rural-urban migration from especially the Groningen clay soil region to large Dutch cities in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, our research has the major advantage that we could utilize both. On the one hand a large database with about 121,000 first marriages in the Groningen city and countryside for the period 1811-1934 of those born in the Groningen clay soil region can be constructed. Next, we will also employ a much more detailed dynamic database with the life courses of more than 3,000 people born around 1830, 1850 and 1870 in the same region. The advantage of the combination of these datasets is that we also can test the claim of Puschmann (2015: 249) that the more optimistic research results regarding the social success of urban migrants found for instance by Sewell (1985) and Lucassen

(2004) must only be attributed to the use of marriage certificates as their source. The small dataset also contains persons who have been in a city rather shortly, so-called "leavers".

We will use both databases to answer the first two research questions on the social profile and the social mobility performance of rural-urban migrants in comparison with rural stayers. The large database has the advantage of delivering more robust results, however, with the smaller database we can ask more refined questions, making a distinction between several groups of rural-urban migrants on basis of the moment they arrived in the city. Finally, the question on the social success of returnees can only be answered using the small database supplying us with information on the whole life course of individuals. We will address these questions using cross-tabulations comparing the social mobility performance of rural stayers, rural-urban migrants and returnees for different social HISCLASS-groups. We did not construct more complicated statistical models, as our prime aim was not to make a complete explanatory model for social success taking into account many other variables, but only to shed light on the general differences in social mobility of those taking different kind of migration decisions for the main rural social groups.

The population in the rural and strong market-oriented agricultural Groningen clay soil region (Paping, 1995) increased from 58,000 in 1809, to 86,000 in 1850, to 114,000 in 1890, to 131,000 in 1920 and to 142,000 in 1940. In this period unskilled labourers formed a large part, and due to proletarianisation in the last decades of the nineteenth century, nearly a majority of the rural households with 48% in 1890 (Paping & Collenteur, 1998). Farmers – usually cultivating rather large holdings – comprised only 15% of the households around that time. In the course of the nineteenth century, the clay parts of rural Groningen experienced a shift from a society dominated by high downward mobility chances and low chances of social success, to a more modern society with relatively a lot of upward social mobility possibilities. This change was mainly due to a strong improvement of the biological reproduction of the labouring class compared to other social groups, making it relatively more easy for the large off-spring of labourers to enter higher social groups that reproduced themselves only to a lesser extent (Paping & Schansker, 2014).

Like many other parts of the countryside, because of the combination of a one-sided specialisation in agriculture and a continuously high natural population-growth, net emigration increased from 1850 onward, first to nearly 0.5%, and from 1880 to 1910 to 1.1% annually. From the agrarian depression of the 1880s onward, population-growth nearly came to an end and was mainly concentrated in a few municipalities experiencing industrialisation having a harbour or acting as a regional centre. Local agriculture could not create extra employment, while the growth in other sectors of this rural economy was relatively limited. Increasingly more inhabitants had to leave the region to find a livelihood. As elsewhere, a considerable part of the rural migrants in this relatively stagnating economy went to the growing larger Dutch cities. The economic development of the Groningen clay soil region resulting in rising proletarianisation and increasing unemployment for unskilled agricultural labourers suggests that especially for the large labouring class migration to the cities must have formed an attractive opportunity. In the next section we will test this through the analysis of the social background of rural-urban migrants from this region in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The most important urban destination from the Groningen clay soil region was the neighbouring capital of Groningen, a city with rather similar religious proportions as the countryside.[1] Especially after 1850 it experienced a relatively rapid population growth compared to the nearby countryside, because of the increase in net migration surplus to 0.7% annually between 1860 and 1900, but also stimulated by the disappearance of the urban death penalty in this period. The overall consequence was an increase in population of the city of Groningen from 26,000 in 1809, to 34,000 in 1850, to 56,000 in 1890, to 90,000 in 1920 and to 122,000 in 1940. This population rise was partly due to the increasing importance of both the trade sector (for instance the grain market) and the government administration and other services (education, medical care) being provincially concentrated in the city of Groningen. Next, there was a rising demand for semi-skilled and skilled industrial labour in the city due to a growth of the printing, sugar, tobacco, clothing and later on the bicycle industry already from the 1850s onward, although really large factories remained rare in Groningen (Kooij, 1987). Quantitatively even more important was the extra employment created in urban small shops and in local handicrafts due to the multiplier effect of the flourishing sectors just mentioned. Because of the

1 Later on our analysis shows that 80% of the movements from the Groningen clay soil region to large urban centres had the nearby city of Groningen as the destination.

diverse nature of economic developments in the city Groningen, it is not easy to connect the rise in migration surplus to a specific sector.

2 DATASETS AND METHODS

2.1 DATA

Our first source is a large set of marriages retrieved from a database containing all marriages (234,000) concluded in the province of Groningen in the period 1811-1934.[2] For several reasons we restricted its number to about 121,000 brides and grooms marrying for the first time. Firstly, we limited ourselves to the brides and grooms born in the Groningen clay soil region comprising the population of less than half the province (for the definition of the borders: Paping, 1995), just like in the second database. One problem in this respect was that the birth place was not mentioned in the marriage certificate in some 2% of the cases. Also there were some villages – which were usually mentioned without stating the municipality they belong to – with similar names, positioned both inside and outside the Groningen clay soil region (for instance Oostwold, Noordwolde, Zuidwolde and Niekerk), or were situated precisely on the border of the clay soil region (for instance Enumatil). These were only taken into account if there were very strong indications that the individuals marrying were really born in the research area. For instance for the first group, because the marriage had taken place in the municipality where the village was situated or an adjourning municipality.

Another problem is the missing of occupations. For grooms this proved to be a fairly limited problem as for only 4% of the marrying males no occupation was mentioned (we did not take occupations of brides into account), though occupations of parents were in 28% of the cases missing in the source. Unfortunately, this results in a bias as the reasons for the missing of occupations were twofold.[3] First, from dead fathers the occupation was often not recorded. Second, there was no occupation stated when parents were already retired or unable to perform labour. The problem with the first group could partly be solved by using the occupation of the mother, if mentioned. Consequently, in this way illegitimate children – who were not legalized later on – could also show up in the database, although they will have been underrepresented because of the general reluctance to mention female occupations in the Dutch Civil Registration (Paping, 2012).

For surnames starting with the letters A and B, we used parental occupations mentioned in marriage certificates of full brothers and sisters. In this way, some of those with unknown or uncertain birth place could be added to the database. This manually conducted procedure,[4] although making it possible to solve the majority of cases with unknown parental occupation, proved very time consuming. We ended up with the aforementioned 121,000 brides or grooms surely born in the Groningen clay soil region, with information on both the occupation of the groom and on the occupation of the parents of the bride or groom born in the Groningen clay soil region.

Our second source is a dataset of 3,240 *life courses* constructed in the context of the Integral History Project Groningen launched in 1987. The original aim of this project was to get insight into the life of ordinary people in Groningen city as well as in the surrounding countryside for the period 1770-1914 (Kooij & Paping, 2004). Selected samples of births from 9 of the 36 municipalities in the Groningen clay area (see Map 1) are organized in the following manner: for every municipality the first 120 births were chosen from January 1st 1830, January 1st 1850 and January 1st 1870 onward, resulting in three cohorts times nine municipalities times 120 births, making 3,240 people. These cohort members were followed at the level of the municipality, province and finally the whole country until their death, their migration abroad, or the moment when we lost track of them in the sources for a significantly long period. Appendix A shows that the quality of the database is extremely high. Only for a tiny number of cohort members it proved impossible to find out what happened with them. This high quality is the

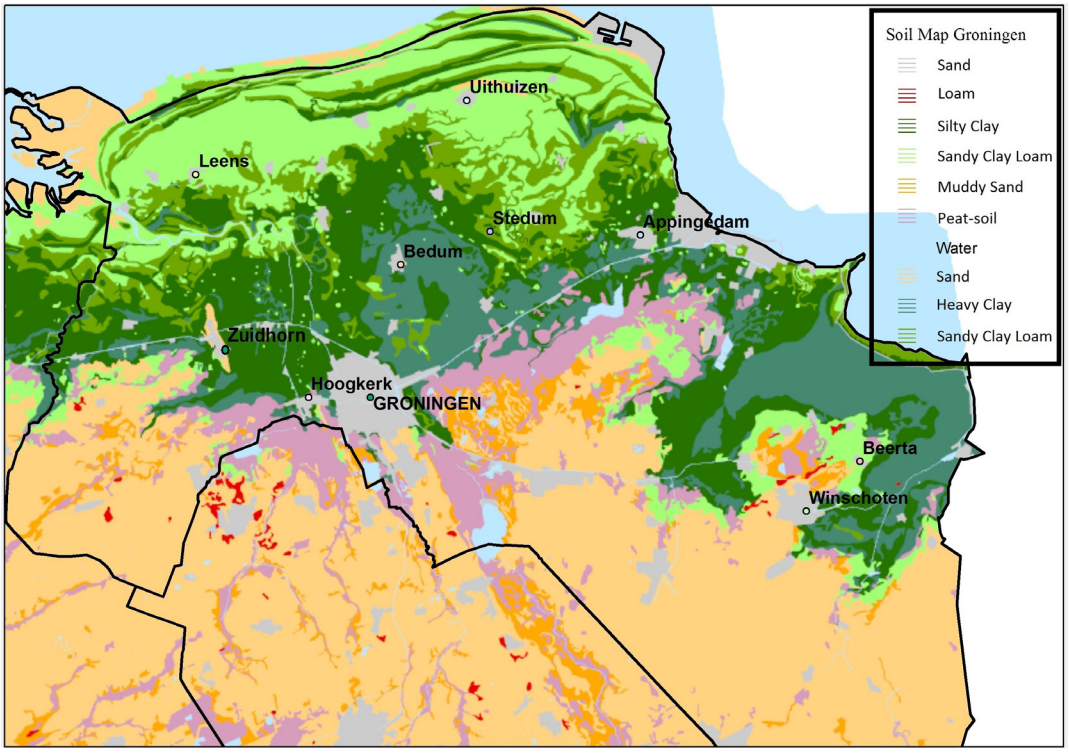
2 This database was kindly supplied by the RHC Groningen Archives.

3 For an extended discussion on potential biases of using marriage certificates for studying intergenerational mobility: Delger & Kok 1998.

4 Because of the numerous spelling mistakes and minor changes in names, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, we have chosen to use a manual procedure.

result of several waves of improving the database and increasing its scope to a continuously larger part of the Netherlands since 1987.[5]

Map 1 *Soil map of the Province of Groningen, with the 9 municipalities selected for the Integral History Project Groningen*



Using data from the Dutch Civil Registration comprising birth, death and marriage records from 1811 onward, and from dynamic Population Registers available from 1850 onward, the dataset covers information on social positions of parents at the research persons' birth, their occupations, both before and after the first marriage, places of settlement (migration history), marriage and personal details of the marriage partner and the birth of children. The high quality of the dataset enables us to trace migration careers not only before and after marriage, but also gives an indication if a migration before marriage was an independent decision of an individual who left the parental household, or a step undertaken by the whole family. In the last part of the article, we have decided to put a restriction on the dataset, and exclude children dying before the age of 5, to reduce biased results – especially regarding the net emigration rates among cohorts – which could arise from the high child mortality of the 1870 birth cohort (Kooij, 2004).

2.2 MIGRATION TRAJECTORIES

Concepts of rural-urban migration and of social classification and social mobility can differ depending on research questions, locations, and periods to which they are applied (Zijdeman, 2009). Consequently, in this and the next subsection, we will explain the definitions used, taking into account the content of our sources and of the local and temporal characteristics of nineteenth-century Groningen.

By migration we mean an officially registered move to a different municipality. For the marriage database we assumed that marrying in the city of Groningen – in 1899 the fifth largest urban centre of the Netherlands – also indicated living in the city of Groningen at least for a certain period. Consequently, those born in the Groningen clay soil area and marrying in Groningen city in some way or another had migrated from the countryside to an urban centre. However, we do not know anything of their further migration trajectory. Also the marriage database restricts our analysis of migration to the nearest main urban centre, and does not give insight into rural-urban migration to more distant (Dutch) cities, as for instance Amsterdam.

5 We want to thank all researchers who contributed to making this database, especially Riemke Westerholt who increased the coverage from Groningen until 1918 to the whole of the Netherlands until 1940.

Fortunately, migration to more distant Dutch cities is included in the much smaller Integral History database. This sample reports fairly high overall rates of individuals with at least one recorded migration (2,012 or 62%).[6] About 970 migrants stayed within the countryside.[7] Just like those who never migrated, they lived their whole life in a rural context and mainly remained within the province of Groningen. Consequently, they had to deal with the seemingly limited opportunities offered by the countryside. A second group of 719 migrants went to a big city at least once. Of these some stayed, while others returned to the countryside later in life. This division in three groups makes it possible to compare the social mobility of people staying in the countryside with those going permanently or staying temporarily in a large city with its manifold possibilities. The expectation is that those going to the city experienced a much higher intergenerational social mobility, however, it is unclear if they were really doing much better than rural stayers. Finally, 323 emigrants moved abroad without ever going to a Dutch city. As they were not followed outside of the Netherlands, their social mobility has not been measured.

We defined a 'big city' as a place (municipality) of at least 15,000 inhabitants in 1899 (www.volkstellingen.nl) and in which the major settlement also had at least 15,000 inhabitants. In this way we excluded smaller towns, but also some large municipalities that were actually conglomerates of smaller, partly rural, settlements. As an exception we decided to include Assen in Drenthe, even though it had not reached 15,000 inhabitants by 1899, due to its role as the administrative centre of a neighbouring province. In Appendix B our selection is presented.

Of course, the previous broad categorisation of migrants into three groups in the Integral History sample has some intrinsic problems. Firstly, there was a small subcategory of 59 persons who first migrated to a big city, and later on went abroad. Often these people went to the Dutch East Indies, while those emigrating directly from the countryside nearly always went to the United States of America. Secondly, we tried to distinguish also between definitive movers to a big city and those returning. We have chosen to look at the place of death as an indicator of final migration to the city, while returnees are defined as those going to a city, but passing away again in the countryside.

2.3 SOCIAL MOBILITY AND SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION

As indicator of intergenerational social mobility, we have compared the social class of the father at the marriage date of the child with the social class of the child at (marriage database) or after (Integral History database) his/her marriage. For daughters we always looked at the social position of their husbands, as information on the occupations of females around and after their marriage is limited, incomplete and sometimes difficult to interpret. Next to this, the occupation of the groom upon or after marriage usually gives a better indication of the future earning possibilities of the couple (Paping, 2009). The career mobility later in life falls outside the scope of this article.

For the large marriage database we compared occupations of fathers and sons (in law) at the same moment in time. However, for the smaller Integral History database we were able to refine the analysis, as it contains the occupations in the first years of marriage of the cohort members. These occupations are compared with those of the parents (usually the father) around the individual's birth. In the case that no occupation was stated in the birth certificate, indications of the parental occupation a few years later were used. In this way the occupations of fathers/sons or sons-in-law were compared when they were at about the same moment in the family life cycle and about the same age.

The last method – though much more complex as record linkage is involved – is measuring the social mobility over one whole generation, supplying an indication of the overall social mobility in a society, partly due to the social mobility of parents later in life, and partly due to the career steps of the younger generation before and shortly after their marriage (Paping & Van der Woude, 1995). The first method neglects on the one hand upward social mobility of parents later in life, and on the other hand disregards that occupations of grooms stated in the marriage register. These are often occupations shortly before marriage, and they do not refer to heads of households. Due to the enormous importance of the live-in servant system until the early twentieth century (Paping, 2017), many men and women changed occupation around the marriage date. The numerous live-in farm hands in our database are a clear

6 In this chapter the restriction to those dying after the age of 5 was not yet applied. Presented numbers are shares of the whole sample of 3,240 individuals.

7 In line with the main purpose of this article, we did not make a distinction between regional and interregional rural migrations.

sign that many marriage certificates report the occupations of brides and grooms before marriage. The consequence of this is that the method of using marriage certificates offers an incomplete picture of intergenerational social mobility. However, as occupations before and after marriage are usually closely related, and intragenerational social mobility some years after marriage is rather limited, the method still provides quite a good indication of social mobility.

Mobility of sons and daughters whose occupations at first marriage placed them in a higher/lower social category than their father's, was coded respectively as upward/downward mobility. Immobility was ascribed to those who stayed in the same social group as their father. For measuring social mobility a proper social classification system is of utmost importance. Unfortunately, we lack in both our datasets consistent and complete information on any other social indicator – as for instance income, land use, tax record and so on – than occupation. Consequently, we run into the numerous problems related to occupational social stratification schemes (Van de Putte & Buyst, 2010; Zijdeman, 2010). In general this is even more worrying, as we are using these social classification schemes to measure social mobility. As measuring it involves comparing two variables measured in an unsecure way, social mobility itself runs an even larger chance on measurement mistakes on the individual level.

We have chosen to take the condensed version of HISCLASS (Van Leeuwen & Maas, 2005; 2011) as a starting point for our analysis, though some revisions have been made to more adequately reflect the nineteenth-century Dutch situation in general and the Groningen situation in particular. Using the dataset of Mandemakers et al. (2013), we initially ascribed HISCO codes to the occupations found in primary sources, and afterwards recoded them into 12 classes. In general we have applied a modified version of the condensed HISCLASS scheme with seven different classes. Evidence for Groningen and Drenthe (Paping, 2010) clearly shows that farmers ('*landbouwers*') formed the top of the rural society, while their position in HISCLASS is lower than middle class occupations (merchants, shopkeepers and artisans). We solved this by raising the position of ordinary farmers to the second level, and creating a new group with occupations of small farmers and fishermen between the skilled workers and the lower skilled workers. Some of the occupations originally placed in category 10 or even 12 – as fishermen who usually owned quite costly ships – were moved to this category.[8]

Table 1 *Modified HISCLASS social classification scheme used*

Social Class condensed	**HISCLASS groups and titles**	
A	**1+2**	Higher managers and professionals
B	**8 part**	Farmers (ordinary and large)
C	**3+4+5**	Lower managers and professionals
D	**6+7**	Foremen and skilled workers
E	**8 part +10 part**	Small farmers, gardeners and fishermen
F	**9**	Lower-skilled workers
G	**11+10 part+12**	Unskilled workers and farm workers

Next to this, we made several less important modifications to Mandemakers et al. (2013), to solve some of the inconsistencies of the classification scheme, and to let the social classification used reflect the actual social structure to a larger extent. The most important modifications moved pedlars or sellers ('*venters*' and '*kramers*') from group 10-12 (unskilled) to 3-5,[9] put all schoolmasters (either head or not) of primary schools into 3-5 (as the occupational titles school head and schoolmaster were used exchangeable in the sources), moved inn-keepers ('*herbergiers*') from 1-2 to 3-5, and moved oil millers, saw millers, sawyers, soap makers to 3-5 (as these titles usually indicate owning an expensive windmill or factory). Someone stated to be milking cows ('*koemelker*') is just like a milking peasant

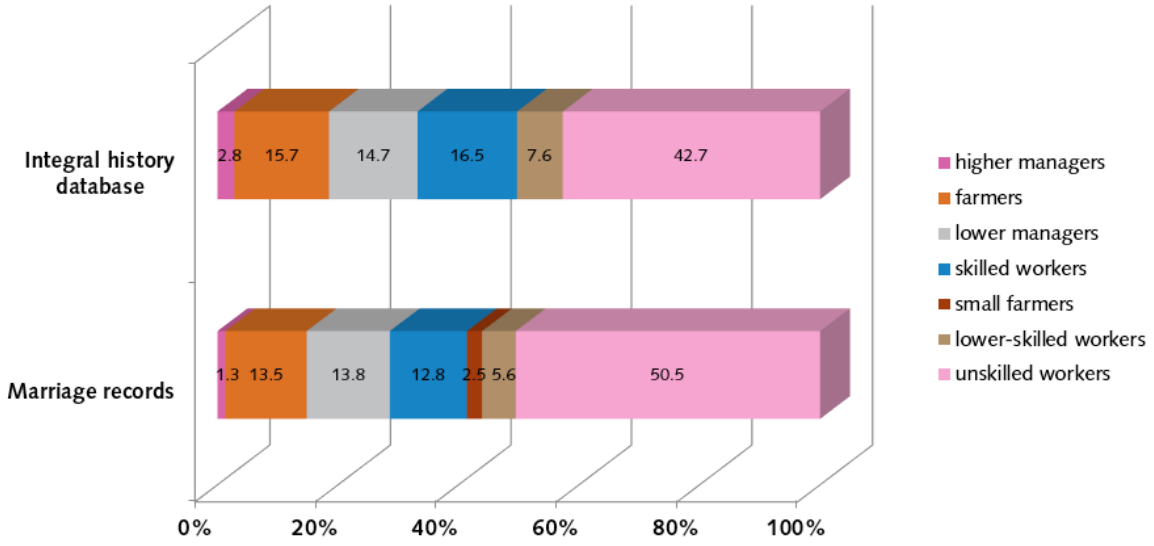
8 This was a rather small category, and we did not use it for analyzing the Integral History database.

9 A movement that, according to us, seems to increase consistency as all the other traders, merchants, shopkeepers, traveling salesmen have been put in group 3-5, and often merchant and pedlar prove to be synonyms in the sources. However, actually a position in 9 (lower skilled) or perhaps 6-7 (skilled) might better reflect the social status of those selling products along the houses, usually for their own account.

('*melkboer*') i.e.- someone who had some cows and sold the produce, thus we positioned them in the 8 remnant group.

Not surprisingly, figure 1 shows that there are large similarities in the social structure of the parents in the two databases used. Unskilled labourers formed about half the population and lower-skilled labourers were quite rare. The social groups: farmers, lower managers and professionals and skilled labourers, were of about equal size in the Groningen clay soil region. Higher managers and professionals were rare. The nine municipalities in the Integral History database include the two main local centres Appingedam and Winschoten. Both had a somewhat lower share of agricultural households, especially labourers. Consequently, the groups: higher managers, skilled and lower-skilled workers, are slightly better represented in the Integral History database, whereas the share of unskilled labourers was considerably lower.

Figure 1 *HISCLASS social positions of parents in the two databases used*



3 GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

3.1 MIGRATION TO A BIG CITY

The people in the Groningen marriage database born in the Groningen clay soil region can be divided into two different groups in respect to migration. On the one hand, more than 9 out of 10 were born and married in the countryside, while only about 8% married in the city of Groningen. As mentioned, the marriage database does not take into account migration to other large Dutch cities.

Table 2 shows some very strong social patterns regarding the movement from the Groningen clay soil region to the nearby city of Groningen. Disproportionately, children from the non-agrarian part of the rural higher classes went more often to the city at 25%. Daughters, however, went considerably less than sons. Children of farmers and unskilled workers were the least prone to go to the city, with daughters of labourers going more often, presumably as they could become a live-in maid in the city. This relative low tendency of migration of unskilled labourers does not seem to accord with pessimistic ideas of nineteenth-century rural-urban migration being largely the consequence of push factors stimulating members of the rural proletariat to enter the urban proletariat (Puschmann, 2015). However, as labourers formed about half the population of the Groningen clay soil region, their children were still the largest social group of those moving to the provincial capital. A middle position was taken by the middle and lower classes active outside agriculture, with about 15% of their sons and daughters going to the city of Groningen, while 85% were staying in the Groningen countryside. It has to be remarked that there were other considerable migration streams as well, especially to Northern America, but also to other parts of the Netherlands.

Table 2 *Social origin of males and females born in the Groningen clay soil region in the province of Groningen included in our marriage database, 1811-1934*

	Male Total (N)	Male City (%)	Female Total (N)	Female City (%)
Higher managers and professionals	686	30%	906	19%
Farmers	7,141	4%	9,189	3%
Lower managers and professionals	7,468	16%	9,252	15%
Foremen and skilled workers	7,185	13%	8,284	13%
Small farmers	1,387	6%	1,663	7%
Lower-skilled workers	3,225	15%	3,578	16%
Unskilled workers and farm workers	28,495	4%	32,484	5%
Total	**55,587**	**8%**	**65,256**	**8%**

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$ (males); and $p < 0.001$ (females).
NB: Be aware that about one third of the marriage certificates is not included in the database due to several reasons mentioned in the text.

The much smaller Integral History database provides the opportunity to include these migration streams and to study rural-urban migration and the general mobility patterns more in detail, as all migration movements of cohort members are known. The resulting detailed information, however, has the problem that the numbers are getting rather small if we want to take into account for instance gender, social class, civil status and period in time all together. Another problem is that it is difficult to compare migration histories of people with so widely diverging life-spans. For the sake of avoiding biased mobility rates, especially concerning our category of 'non-migrants' consisting of individuals without a single migration recorded, we have calculated the overall mobility both of the whole sample (table 3) and for a more limited group of individuals dying after the age of 5 (table 4). Such a procedure was partly dictated by the smallpox pandemic of 1871 in the province, due to which about a third of the 1870 cohort died before the age of 5, compared tot 20-25% of the 1830 and 1850 cohorts (Appendix A).

It has to be remarked that the relatively high share of urban migration of the Integral History cohort members compared to the large database must be attributed to several factors. First, it also includes those migrating to the city and later on returning to the countryside (discussed further in section 4.3) and movements to other large cities. Next, the small dataset comprises people born around 1830, 1850 and 1870, who consequently married mainly between 1850 and 1900, while the marriage data covers the much longer period 1811-1934. The share of those marrying in the city of Groningen, compared to those marrying in the whole of the province, increased from 6.4% (1811/1836), to 6.5% (1837/1860), to 7.5% (1861/1885), to 10.2% (1886/1910) and 10.0% (1911/1934). Presumably more important was the distorting influence of the selection of the nine municipalities, two of whom were very near to the city of Groningen (Bedum and Hoogkerk), while also the two small local urban centres Winschoten and Appingedam were selected. Thus, the inclination of moving to a big city (both Groningen and Amsterdam) was relatively large.

Both tables 3 and 4 clearly show that the rural population of Groningen was extremely mobile, irrespective of the social background. Nevertheless, the tables report the same social differences we have seen analysing the marriage database (table 2). Children of higher managers and professionals indeed were the most mobile, and moved to the largest extent to a big city. The next group strongly attracted by big cities were children of lower managers and professionals. Children of farmers and farm workers, on the other hand, were the least prone to have ever moved to a big city, although this group was still surprisingly mobile in the countryside, moving from one village to the other. The least mobile were in general children of skilled workers. Overall differences in migration-rates between this group and the slightly more mobile lower-skilled workers, however, were fairly small and skilled workers in industry and services were definitely more inclined to go to a big city. Children of unskilled farm labourers usually remained in the countryside. These marked differences between socio-economics

groups regarding tendencies to move to the city, definitely suggest rural selection processes, since rural people with more usefull skills in an urban environment were more prone to move to the city.

Table 3 *Migration behaviour of Integral History cohort members, born in the Groningen clay soil region, 1830, 1850 and 1870 (social background of their parents)*

	Migration category				Total
	Non-migrants	Only within country-side	Once to a big city	Migration abroad	
Higher managers and professionals	38%	19%	44%	0%	92
Farmers (including small farmers)	41%	37%	19%	4%	509
Lower managers and professionals	37%	24%	32%	6%	477
Foremen and skilled workers	42%	25%	25%	9%	533
Lower-skilled workers	39%	26%	29%	5%	247
Unskilled workers and farm workers	36%	33%	16%	16%	1,382
Total	**1,228**	**970**	**719**	**323**	**3,240**
	38%	30%	22%	10%	100%

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$.
NB: From the overall number of migrations abroad (382), 59 individuals who came across a city, were coded under the category 'to a big city'.

Table 4 *Migration behaviour of Integral History cohort members surviving until the age of five, born in the Groningen clay soil region, 1830, 1850 and 1870 (social background of their parents)*

	Migration category			N
	Non-migrants	Only within the countryside	Once to a big city	
Higher managers and professionals	16%	23%	61%	64
Farmers (including small farmers)	29%	47%	24%	384
Lower managers and professionals	25%	31%	44%	313
Foremen and skilled workers	32%	35%	33%	367
Lower-skilled workers	28%	36%	36%	170
Unskilled workers and farm workers	25%	51%	24%	808
Total	**27%**	**43%**	**30%**	**2,106**

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$.
NB: Excluded are 323 migrants who migrated abroad directly from the place of birth or from a different location in the countryside, whereas included are 59 individuals who came across a big city before leaving the Netherlands.

Both tables 3 and 4 clearly show that the rural population of Groningen was extremely mobile, irrespective of the social background. Nevertheless, the tables report the same social differences we have seen analysing the marriage database (table 2). Children of higher managers and professionals indeed were the most mobile, and moved to the largest extent to a big city. The next group strongly attracted by big cities were children of lower managers and professionals. Children of farmers and farm workers, on the other hand, were the least prone to have ever moved to a big city, although this group was still surprisingly mobile in the countryside, moving from one village to the other. The least mobile

were in general children of skilled workers. Overall differences in migration-rates between this group and the slightly more mobile lower-skilled workers, however, were fairly small and skilled workers in industry and services were definitely more inclined to go to a big city. Children of unskilled farm labourers usually remained in the countryside. These marked differences between socio-economics groups regarding tendencies to move to the city, definitely suggest rural selection processes, since rural people with more usefull skills in an urban environment were more prone to move to the city.

Table 5 *Share of migrants going to a big city (including those moving abroad via a city), of the cohorts of persons born 1830, 1850 and 1870 in the Groningen clay soil region surviving until after the age of 5*

	Cohort			Total
	1830	**1850**	**1870**	
Migration to a city	160	224	257	641
Total	790	741	599	2,130
% per cohort	**20%**	**30%**	**42%**	**30%**

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$.

In general, geographical mobility rates increased considerably over time. Whereas for the 1830 cohort as much as 30% of those who survived the age of 5 never moved from the municipality of birth, in 1850 it was 24%, and finally only 14% for the 1870 cohort that directly experienced the agrarian depression of the 1880's and the 1890's. The relative stagnation of the population in the Groningen clay soil region from 1880 onwards (Paping, 1999) resulted indeed in a large out-flux of people, both to the big Dutch cities and abroad (see figures in Appendix A). The share of other Dutch cities, located further away than the provincial capital Groningen, grew simultaneously with the rising rural-urban migration rates presented in table 5. Of the 719 urban migrants from the clay soil region, 21% of the cohort of 1830 went also to a Dutch city outside Groningen, while 32% of the cohort of 1850 and even 47% of the cohort of 1870 left for a Dutch city elsewhere. Clearly, the Groningen countryside became more and more integrated in the Netherlands as a whole. Movements to Amsterdam and other cities in the west of the Netherlands became increasingly part of migration trajectories. This development might be explained partly by the improvement in transport linkages between the northern Dutch provinces and the central part of the country.

3.2 FIRST MIGRATION AND MIGRATION ABROAD

The integral history dataset makes it possible to look more in detail to the rural-urban migration process. In this section we will look at first migrations with our primary focus relying on the migration preferences among different social groups. Table 6 includes only migrations after the twelfth birthday, considering them to be independent moves, undertaken by unmarried adolescents. Of course, we are aware that some of these migrations took place together with the parental family; though family migration many years after the marriage of the parents was quite rare (Paping, 2004), this assumption does not constitute a major flaw.

It seems that adolescent rural Groningen children from upper and middle classes economically active in the service sector tended to choose big cities as their first destination much more often than children from farmers and unskilled labourers mainly active in agriculture. These findings contrast sharply with those of Sewell (1985) who established an oversupply of migrants from an agricultural background for Marseille around the middle of the nineteenth century. Though it again seems to be more in accordance with Long (2005) who states that urban British migrants did not originate from the most destitute rural residents. Interestingly in this respect is that in rural Groningen, children of low-skilled labourers active in the industry or service sector also went relatively often to a city, whereas children of skilled workers – mainly independent artisans with a business of their own – where less attracted by big cities. In the case of farmers, who occupied a relatively high position in the social hierarchy in the Groningen clay soil region as we discussed previously, the low rate of urban migration can be explained by their strong ties with the rural economy. Many times their hands were necessary for the maintenance of the parental farm. Children from unskilled parents, as was also already shown by Kok

and Delger (1998) for the Utrecht population, did not adhere to the image of a "floating proletariat", at least not if we look at the moment of their first migration.

This initial reluctance of children from unskilled workers towards long-distance migrations, or more precisely urban migration, can be explained not so much by the lack of basic means to cover direct migration costs, though more by limited knowledge of the situation and of their chances on the urban job market, next to the limited useful skills they had for this market. The opposite is the case for the children of rural elites. This group hardly migrates abroad, whereas more than half of them went to the city, mostly for educational purposes.

Table 6 *Direction of the first migration after the age of 12 of children born in the Groningen clay soil region, 1830-1870 by social background of the parents*

	To a big city	Within the countryside	Abroad	N
Higher managers and professionals	51%	49%	0%	35
Farmers	18%	80%	2%	203
Lower managers and professionals	25%	67%	7%	175
Foremen and skilled workers	17%	76%	7%	221
Lower-skilled workers	29%	64%	7%	94
Unskilled workers and farm workers	12%	76%	12%	522
Total	**225**	**923**	**102**	**1,250**
	18%	**74%**	**8%**	**100.0%**

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$.

Next to a quite remarkable low rate of urban migration among the poorest group, we have to mention the striking parallel between their rates of urban migration and of migration abroad. Whereas for all remaining social groups migration outside the Netherlands played rather a marginal role, for the unskilled labourers' sons and daughters it was as likely to go to the city as to travel abroad on their first move. Presumably, children of skilled and lower-skilled workers, and lower managers and professionals were less inclined to go abroad, as they also had opportunities in the city, whereas children of farm labourers usually might not have thought they had the capabilities to build up a decent kind of urban career. In the United States this limited human capital seemed to have played a lesser role (Paping 2004).

3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS

Before trying to assess the levels and changes of social mobility, with special attention to those moving to the city, it will be instructive to provide more insight into the characteristics of urban migrants. Among the total number of 719 urban migrants, as much as 25% went to the city with their parents. This group will not be taken into consideration in the analysis of intergenerational mobility, though we will take them into account when discussing the returnees. Next to this, another 29% of the individuals arrived for the first time in a big city while already being married. As they usually already achieved their occupational position in the countryside directly after marriage, they will be included in the group of rural 'stayers' when analysing social mobility. Consequently, we have 332 people at our disposal who moved to a city alone and married afterwards. Within this group leaving the countryside for the city, there were no significant differences in numbers between males and females.

Members of most social groups usually firstly migrated within the countryside, before entering the city. Only two social groups had a strong preference for an 'urban move' as their first migration: children of the rural elite and farmers. This presumably was an effect of family-specific knowledge concerning other places (Kok et al., 2014). The first group, as was already discussed earlier, was mainly driven by the educational character of their migration to institutes like universities situated in the cities. The high rate of the second group is presumably a consequence of the nature of our sample.[10]

10 Many of the farmer children came from nearby Hoogkerk or Bedum, both municipalities with a relative high share of farmers within their population. For them it was not strange to go directly to the city.

In general, the difference in share of males and females moving to the city was limited, but on the level of social groups the differences are quite vast. The numbers are rather small, though they are quite similar to the differences observed in table 2, where we considered the large dataset. Sons (65%) of higher and lower managers and professionals were to a much larger extent attracted by the city than their sisters (35%). For the children from the lower classes, it was the other way around, with a much higher number of daughters (62%) moving alone to the city than sons (38%). These rather unskilled women were attracted by the numerous job opportunities available such as domestic servant positions in the city, while daughters of the rural elite were kept at home.

4 INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY

In this section, we are first going to look at the differences in social mobility patterns based on the general marriage database. We will constantly compare those marrying in the city of Groningen (movers to the city) and those marrying in the Groningen countryside (stayers in the countryside). Which group is socially more successful? Next, we will analyse the social mobility patterns in the more refined Integral History dataset, making a difference between those people born in the Groningen clay soil region moving to a big Dutch city (whether the city of Groningen or elsewhere) with their parents, and those moving alone as a step in their own career. Finally, we will be looking at the relative social success of rural returnees in more detail.

4.1 SOCIAL MOBILITY AND MARRIAGE RECORDS

Firstly, the marriage database shows that there were very important differences in the social mobility patterns of males and females born in the Groningen clay soil region. Compared with the social position of their parents at the same moment in time, women proved to be much more socially mobile, experiencing both a lot more upward and downward mobility (tables 7 and 8). Partly, this is the effect of using the occupation of the groom to measure the social position of the younger generation. This might also be the effect of a lower transfer of social, cultural and even economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; 2001) to daughters than to sons. The gender difference in both upward and downward social mobility was rather huge and about the same for those marrying in the city or in the countryside. A quarter more of all the daughters were mobile compared to sons.

If we look at the different social backgrounds, than it becomes clear that the chance for upward social mobility is largest for those sons going to the city for every social group, compared to those staying behind in the countryside. This suggests that moving to a city might indeed have been a successful strategy. At the same time the chance for downward social mobility in the city is also usually lower for most of the social groups, with the clear exception of farmers' sons and to a limited extent for sons of skilled workers. As we have positioned farmers at the second level of our social classification scheme, large downward social mobility does not come as a surprise. In the city there are nearly no farms, and although their social status in the countryside is very high, it was quite difficult for sons of farmers to enter urban elite positions – though some did – because it might often have been sons of less well-to-do farmers who migrated to the city.

At first sight, it seems confusing that nevertheless overall those sons moving to a city experienced much more downward social mobility than those staying in the countryside (27% compared to 16%). However, there is a very good statistical explanation for that. Sons of rural unskilled labourers relatively rarely went to the city. As the lowest social group they cannot experience downward social mobility, and as by far the largest social group in the countryside, they greatly influence the general rate of downward social mobility of those remaining in the countryside, being only 16%. For any other social group rural downward social mobility rates are much higher, ranging from 24% to even 57%.

Remarkably, the social mobility patterns of daughters are rather diverging, also if we look at social groups. Again daughters from the lowest class going to the city experienced a lot more upward social mobility than those staying in the countryside and often again marrying a farm labourer. However, in contrast to sons, chances of upward social mobility for daughters of other social groups experiencing urban migration were not really much better than those for women staying behind in the countryside. Actually these chances were usually even slightly smaller.

Table 7 *Upward and downward social mobility of males born in the Groningen clay soil region, 1811-1934 (occupation on marriage certificate compared to that of the parents mentioned in marriage certificates)*

Marrying in Groningen-city				Marrying in countryside		
Down-ward	**Immobile**	**Upward**		**Down-ward**	**Immobile**	**Upward**
45%	55%	-	Higher managers and professionals	57%	43%	-
76%	16%	8%	Farmers	29%	70%	1%
41%	54%	5%	Lower managers and professionals	49%	47%	4%
30%	49%	21%	Foremen and skilled workers	29%	58%	13%
30%	17%	53%	Small farmers	37%	33%	30%
17%	41%	43%	Lower-skilled workers	24%	47%	29%
-	37%	63%	Unskilled and farm workers	-	80%	20%
27%	**44%**	**29%**	**Total**	**16%**	**69%**	**15%**
1,151	1,862	1,252	N	8,287	35,156	7,879

Note: Chi-square tests for the table results in: $p < 0.001$ for both city and countryside.

Table 8 *Upward and downward social mobility of females born in the Groningen clay soil region, 1811-1934 (occupation on marriage certificate compared to that of the parents mentioned in marriage certificates)*

Marrying in Groningen-city				Marrying in countryside		
Down-ward	**Im-mobile**	**Upward**	**Social class**	**Down-ward**	**Im-mobile**	**Upward**
54%	46%	-	Higher managers and professionals	63%	37%	-
88%	8%	4%	Farmers	45%	52%	4%
55%	40%	4%	Lower managers and professionals	57%	35%	9%
43%	32%	26%	Foremen and skilled workers	43%	30%	27%
48%	5%	48%	Small farmers	36%	14%	49%
20%	29%	50%	Lower-skilled workers	31%	20%	50%
-	29%	71%	Unskilled and farm workers	-	74%	26%
33%	**31%**	**35%**	**Total**	**22%**	**56%**	**22%**
1,740	1,648	1,851	N	13,648	33,338	13,311

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$ for both city and countryside.

If we look at the chances of downward intergenerational social mobility for women, the results reported in table 8 are even more mixed. Daughters of lower skilled workers and higher managers and professionals had a lower chance of downward social mobility, while daughters of large farmers (again) – but also of small farmers – experienced more downward mobility in the cities. For daughters originating from the middle groups differences between staying in the countryside or moving to the city of Groningen were limited. That the downward social mobility rate of women migrating to the city was much higher, again had to do with the relatively small group of daughters of labourers settling in Groningen-city. The difference in social chances in the city between males and females might be related to rural girls usually entering the city as servants (compare Bras, 2003), while rural boys moving to the city might have been selected for their skills and in this way had more opportunities. These relatively negative results for females are not in accordance with findings of Bras (1998) regarding unmarried women from the Dutch province of Zeeland in the period 1820-1935, using a relatively small sample. Her research suggests that moving to the city increased the chances of marrying a groom with a higher social status, while being a domestic servant was also positive in this respect. Clearly, further research into gender differences related to the social effects of rural-urban migration seems necessary.

Table 9 *The development of the social mobility of people born in the Groningen clay soil region marrying either in the city of Groningen or in the countryside, 1811-1934*

City				Countryside		
Downward	**Immobile**	**Upward**		**Downward**	**Immobile**	**Upward**
45%	33%	22%	**1811-1835**	30%	55%	15%
40%	33%	26%	**1836-1860**	25%	61%	13%
36%	39%	25%	**1861-1885**	18%	68%	14%
27%	39%	34%	**1886-1910**	16%	65%	19%
23%	37%	41%	**1911-1934**	16%	56%	28%
30%	**37%**	**33%**	**Total**	**20%**	**61%**	**19%**
2,891	3,510	3,103	N (total)	21,755	68,494	21,190

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$ for both city and countryside.

The figures in table 9 show that we have to be careful interpreting the previous tables without taking developments over time into account. During the period 1811-1934 there was indeed in Groningen a very strong shift from a society dominated by downward social mobility, towards one dominated by upward social mobility (Paping & Schansker, 2014). Both downward and upward mobility figures were – as we already have seen – much higher for those going to the city, and the chances on first sight were the best for movers to the city. However, for both groups, percentages of people experiencing downward mobility about halved, while percentages for those experiencing upward mobility nearly doubled, so relatively the difference was very small. This striking development is also due to the changes in social structure of the society in this period, which were enlarged by the use of a HISCLASS-based social stratification scheme. In HISCLASS relatively modern positions in especially the growing service sector are rated considerably higher than more old-fashioned occupations in handicrafts and agriculture.

It is interesting to point at the development of social immobility. Until the period 1861-1885 social immobility increased significantly, especially for those staying in the countryside. The reason might be that the occupational structure of the Groningen clay soil region became quantitatively more and more dominated by an enormous group of unskilled labourers working in agriculture. However, the immobility of those moving to the city also increased. After 1885 social mobility in general increased again, and even more so after 1910. Again, this development was mostly restricted to those staying behind in the countryside. With the falling share of agriculture in the occupational structure, and the rising importance of all kinds of more specialised functions in services and industry in the countryside, children of labourers and lower skilled workers increasingly obtained more skilled middle class positions in the period 1911-1934.

4.2 SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE INTEGRAL HISTORY DATABASE

In the marriage record database it is impossible to make a distinction between those born in the countryside, those moving with their parents and those moving to the city alone while being

unmarried. Interestingly, the Integral History database makes it possible to separate the last group. Not surprisingly, urban migration resulted in a very high upward social mobility of youngsters moving alone as table 10 shows. However, its effect depended heavily on the social background of the person undertaking such a step.

Table 10 *Shares of intergenerational mobility of individuals born in the Groningen clay soil region, 1830, 1850 and 1870 migrating alone to a big city, compared to those staying in the countryside*

Urban migrants migrating alone	**Higher managers and professionals**	**Farmers**	**Lower managers and professionals**	**Foremen and skilled workers**	**Lower-skilled workers**	**Unskilled workers**	**Total**
Downward mobility	53%	79%	48%	35%	23%	-	28%
Immobility	47%	11%	40%	29%	12%	31%	30%
Upward mobility	-	11%	13%	37%	65%	69%	43%
Total	**15**	**19**	**48**	**49**	**26**	**90**	**247**
% of total urban migrants	6%	8%	19%	20%	11%	36%	100%
Rural stayers	**Higher managers and professionals**	**Farmers**	**Lower managers and professionals**	**Foremen and skilled workers**	**Lower-skilled workers**	**Unskilled workers**	**Total**
Downward mobility	73%	32%	44%	31%	30%	-	19%
Immobility	27%	63%	40%	48%	28%	69%	58%
Upward mobility	-	4%	16%	22%	42%	31%	23%
Total	**15**	**248**	**160**	**213**	**93**	**585**	**1,314**

As expected, young people from the two lowest social groups, lower-skilled and unskilled workers, had an overwhelmingly higher rate of upward mobility than other rural-urban migrants who moved alone. They were able to take the most advantage of the numerous possibilities offered by urban employment. The rate of upward mobility which these groups achieved by leaving the countryside is indeed enormous, with 65% and 69%. A future in a city seems to have been very attractive for unskilled rural labourers' children. Nevertheless, before claiming superiority of urban migration for social careers of these people, we have to complete our picture of their migration opportunities, i.e. divide our category of rural stayers between those who were geographically mobile within the countryside (be it a local or inter-regional move, within agricultural labour-markets) and those who never left the village of their birth. As table 11 shows, rural-rural migration has the lowest upward mobility rate. Thus, if one was about to climb the social ladder as a child of a labourer, he or she would benefit by going immediately to a city instead of spending time on local, micro scale migrations, or by staying at the place of birth.

Table 11 *Shares of intergenerational mobility for children of labourers born in the Groningen clay soil region, 1830, 1850 and 1870*

		Immobility	**Upward mobility**	**N**
Unskilled and farm workers	Migration within the countryside	72%	28%	343
	No migration recorded	70%	31%	95
	Migration to a city alone	31%	69%	90

Non-succeeding sons of farmers and professionals who had in general a high risk of downward mobility (Kok & Delger, 1998; Paping & Karel, 2011), could not escape this fate by moving to a city. The situation of the sons and daughters of skilled workers in a city seems to have been the most conspicuous one, their mobility scores are almost equally distributed between upward mobility, downward mobility and immobility. For them, in contrast to the migrants from lower and unskilled labourer background, opportunities for upward mobility provided by cities' labour markets were far more limited, partly because employment in the industrial sector could not easily lift them above

their father's position. However, one may ask the question if skilled workers often tied to traditional occupations, that at that time started to become under pressure of mechanisation processes, had much chance to keep up with the occupation of their father. In an urban environment the social capital and training that skilled workers received in the countryside, probably met with strong competition of the growing influx of children of unskilled workers, who while improving their skills started to replace traditional artisans. From the 90 individual children from unskilled parents migrating alone to the city, 19 were themselves or were married to lower-skilled workers after marriage, 23 became skilled workers and also 19 belonged to the social group of managers and professionals.

If we want to assess the relative importance and scale of opportunities offered by urban migration for the nineteenth-century rural population of the Groningen clay soil region, we have to compare our former findings with the situation of those who stayed in the countryside, as we already did for unskilled labourers. Table 10 also gives overall rates of intergenerational mobility of those who did not leave the countryside before marriage. Starting from the top, it becomes clear that the high social position of farmers was strongly related to the place where their status was achieved. In the case of farmers, the relation between social position and land ownership is self-evident, and their low geographical mobility is perfectly understandable. In comparison, as the higher social position of managers and professionals was primarily depending on education, their children were continuously forced to move. Whereas for farmers' children the best way to maintain the high social position of the parents was to stay in the countryside, while for children of managers it was better to move to a city.

In the case of skilled workers, table 10 also seems to prove at least partially our conclusion on their prospects in a big city. We clearly see that staying in the countryside could protect them from eventual downward mobility in a city. It also helped them keep up continuity with the achievements of their fathers. At the same time, by staying in the countryside their prospects for moving upward were pushed away. The tendency for intergenerational immobility proved to be strongest (69%) among those, who could be the most interested in life improvement, e.g. the children of unskilled labourers.

In conclusion, the chance of upward mobility for those going to the city alone was much higher (43%), than for those remaining in the countryside (23%). However, their chances of downward social mobility were also considerably larger (28% versus 19%). As already mentioned, in Groningen it were especially the children of lower and unskilled labourers who made the most of the difference in upward chances between rural stayers and those moving to the city.

4.3 SOCIAL MOBILITY OF RETURNEES

Migration is anything but an irreversible process. Selection processes play a significant role at the level of the 'sending' community, as well as after arrival at the place of destination. We will first look at the characteristics of the returnee group, and later on study their social achievements.

Table 12 *Social background of rural 'returnees' and rural migrants dying in the city (Integral History Project sample)*

	Higher managers and professionals	Farmers	Lower managers and professionals	Foremen, skilled workers	Lower-skilled workers	Unskilled workers	Total
Died in the city	26	64	85	95	46	132	448
	70%	70%	61%	77%	68%	66%	68%
Returned to the countryside	11	28	54	29	22	68	212
	30%	30%	39%	23%	32%	34%	32%

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.15$.

As table 12 indicates, the social group most prone to come back to the countryside were children of skilled and unskilled labourers and of lower managers, though the differences were limited and taking into account the small numbers, not statistically significant. The relatively high number of returnees among children of unskilled labourers, can be explained in several ways. For many the first migration outside the rural network was an interim rather than a strategic step. Migration abroad, to distant places was as good as migration to a city. Nevertheless, to call the urban experience of those descending

from the lower class, who after marriage came back to the countryside, an urban 'failure' would be a misnomer. Their upward mobility rate (table 13), still by far, exceeds the achievements of those who did not decide to give themselves a chance in a city. An upward mobility rate of 60% for returning children of unskilled labourers seems to back up our initial hypothesis about a possible positive effect of an urban move. Even though at this moment we cannot provide an answer to the question at what moment the better occupation was obtained, in the city or after return to the countryside, we can still conclude that the urban experience in accumulating human or other capital seemed to have improved the position of returnees. Or, in the case of labourers' daughters, the move to the city made it possible to find a marriage partner with a higher social status.

Table 13 *Indices of intergenerational mobility of individuals returning to the countryside (Integral History Project sample)*

	Downward mobility	Immobility	Upward mobility	Total
Higher managers and professionals	29%	71%	-	7
Farmers	58%	32%	11%	19
Lower managers and professionals	50%	41%	9%	44
Foremen and skilled workers	36%	40%	24%	25
Lower-skilled workers	14%	29%	57%	21
Unskilled workers; Lower-skilled and unskilled farm workers	-	40%	60%	53
Total	**28%**	**39%**	**33%**	**169**

Note: Chi-square test for the table results in: $p < 0.001$.

Despite the low number of returnees in the sample, table 13 suggests one interesting conclusion. Children of unskilled labourers who decided to come back after staying in a city were surely not the least successful ones. Their upward mobility rate coincides with both the overall upward mobility characteristics of those born in the countryside marrying in Groningen-city, and with the mobility level of permanent urban migrants from the countryside. The same was more or less the case for lower-skilled workers, but nearly not for skilled workers (compare tables 10 and 13).

In table 14 we finally give an overview of our results for the Integral History cohort members. It offers the information for the 1,659 individuals for whom we were able to measure the intergenerational social mobility.[11] For the children descending from the lowest three social groups, staying in the countryside always resulted in a lower chance of upward social mobility, with the exception of children of lower-skilled labourers who moved to the city with their parents experiencing upward social mobility in only 29% of the cases. For the children of farmers, lower managers and professionals it did not make much difference.

The chance to retain the parental social position was usually a lot higher for those staying in the countryside before marriage, with the notable exception of higher and lower managers and professionals. Those groups often seemed to have needed a stay in big cities to uphold their occupational status, just as we concluded from the analysis of the marriage certificates (tables 7 and 8). The chance of downward social mobility was usually about the same for most lower groups. In this respect, we have already seen that the small group of children of higher managers and professionals and of farmers were the exception. Farmers' children could secure the parental position much easier while staying in the countryside, whereas staying in the countryside was nearly disastrous for children of the elite.

11 Total number of people, who met the requirements of: A. Being married in the Netherlands; B. The marriage date is known, and we can measure social mobility (upward, downward, immobile). From all 1682 marriage certificates, 18 were taken out of observation, because these persons married abroad, and 5 due to a missing marriage date, even though sometimes the occupations were known.

Table 14 *Social mobility for different groups of cohort members born 1830, 1850 and 1870 in the Groningen clay soil area*

Downward social mobility	Higher man.	Farm	Lower man.	Skilled	Low skilled	Unskilled	N (down-ward)
In countryside before marriage	73%	32%	44%	31%	30%	-	**255**
Moving to city with parents	40%	100%	41%	21%	43%	-	**41**
Moving to city alone	50%	78%	49%	34%	24%	-	**66**
N (downward)	**24**	**108**	**106**	**84**	**40**	**-**	**362**
Returnees (to city with parents)	-	100%	54%	-	-	-	**10**
Returnees (to city alone)	33%	75%	44%	18%	23%	-	**11**

Socially immobile	Higher man.	Farm	Lower man.	Skilled	Low skilled	Unskilled	N (im-mobile)
In countryside before marriage	27%	63%	40%	48%	28%	69%	**758**
Moving to city with parents	60%	0%	45%	29%	29%	40%	**38**
Moving to city alone	50%	11%	38%	30%	12%	32%	**72**
N (immobile)	**20**	**159**	**95**	**120**	**33**	**441**	**868**
Returnees (to city with parents)	100%	0%	38%	50%	50%	60%	**11**
Returnees (to city alone)	67%	13%	44%	36%	15%	36%	**31**

Upward social mobility	Higher man.	Farm	Lower man.	Skilled	Low skilled	Unskilled	N (upward)
In countryside before marriage	-	4%	16%	22%	42%	31%	**301**
Moving to city with parents	-	0%	14%	50%	29%	60%	**27**
Moving to city alone	-	11%	13%	36%	64%	68%	**101**
N (upward)	-	**13**	**35**	**70**	**59**	**252**	**429**
Returnees (to city with parents)	-	0%	8%	50%	50%	40%	**5**
Returnees (to city alone)	-	13%	11%	45%	62%	64%	**37**

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this article we presented results comparing the relation between moving to the city, or staying in the countryside with social mobility performance using two available datasets for the Groningen clay soil region in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In contrast with most other literature that usually concentrates on specific cities, we have looked at rural-urban migration from the perspective of the countryside as a sending region. The main conclusions from the large marriage database were reaffirmed by the much smaller database with life courses, which made a much more detailed analysis possible. In general, the population of the Groningen clay soil region was very mobile geographically. Even before the arrival of industrialisation, people from Groningen were moving in all possible directions, although there were significant differences between social classes.

In line with the results of Long (2005) for Victorian England, the poorest rural inhabitants were underrepresented in the group of rural-urban migrants, while the last also had relatively often a non-agricultural background, in contrast with the findings of Sewell (1985) for nineteenth-century migrants to Marseille. In this respect the results also support more optimistic views of individual rural-urban migration decisions being mainly stimulated by urban opportunities for individuals and less by the poor local circumstances in the countryside. Consequently, in Groningen the children of the non-agricultural rural middle classes (skilled workers, lower and higher managers and professionals) were

overrepresented in rural-urban migration, whereas children of unskilled labourers, next to farmers' children were less prone to migrate to the city. Presumably, lack of human capital useful in an urban context, next to the 'cultural' distance between living in the countryside and in the city, made going to a big city for unskilled labourers even more challenging than leaving for such a distant region as Michigan in the United States. However, because unskilled labourers in the Groningen clay soil region formed nearly half the population, their children still formed the largest socio-economic group entering the city.

As expected, rural-urban migrants experienced both a much larger upward and downward intergenerational social mobility than stayers in the Groningen clay soil region. More interesting is the result that for nearly every social group an urban move improved on average the social chances of individuals in comparison with rural stayers. The only clear exception were children of farmers, an occupational group that largely formed the elite in the Groningen countryside. These findings are again nearly in accordance with the optimistic findings of Long (2005) for nineteenth-century Britain. Presumably, this relative success must be attributed to a positive selection of urban migrants in the countryside, having better education and being relatively more enterprising than stayers as is also argued by Dribe and Svensson (2006) for Sweden. In this respect it is illuminating that especially children of unskilled workers, who relatively rarely went to large cities in Groningen, were especially far more successful in the city than rural stayers. Interestingly, our large database shows that the positive aspects of a rural-urban move for intergenerational social mobility were mainly visible for males, whereas for females differences between rural stayers and urban migrants were limited, with the exception of the lower classes.

Puschmann (2015) suggests that the more optimistic results regarding social success of urban migrants as found by Sewell (1985) and Lucassen (2004) might be attributed to the use of marriage certificates which do not take into account rural people staying in the city for only a relatively short time. This proposition, however, is not confirmed by our research, since our results showed the same positive outcomes using a large database of marriage records and a smaller database with more refined life course data including returnees.

Our investigation of those rural migrants returning to the countryside makes clear that at least for the Groningen clay soil region, even a temporary stay in the city could have lasting positive effects, especially for children of unskilled labourers. Also, for children of the non-agrarian rural elite a temporary move to the city for educational or career reasons was a rather common way to preserve their privileged position. In accordance with Hochstadt (1999), returning to the countryside in this period of urbanisation and industrialisation can not be automatically seen as a sign of failure in Groningen, as many returnees took advantage of their temporary stay in the city.

Of course this article limits itself to only one region, however, we hope to have made clear that taking the perspective of the sending rural environment can shed much more light on the intergenerational social mobility implications of the large and growing rural-urban migration streams in Western-Europe and beyond from the nineteenth century onward. Our analysis shows at the same time that for groups from different socio-economic backgrounds, rural-urban migration can have very different effects on average social mobility performances. In our case individual rural-urban migration proved to be much more dictated by urban opportunities of specific groups or individuals than by the relatively bad economic situation in the Groningen clay soil region from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. It was not the poorest parts of rural society that moved to the city most often, but usually those with relatively good prospects in an urban context. Consequently, the intergenerational social mobility performance of rural-urban migrants was relatively good, even if they returned to the countryside. However, before stating this as the general pattern in Western-Europe in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, many more cases still have to be studied.

ACKNOWEDGMENTS

An earlier version of this article was presented at the 8th Day of Historical Demography, Groningen, 11 December 2015. We want to thank the editors and reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts.

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APPENDIX A

The quality of the Integral History cohorts of the Groningen countryside, 1830, 1850, 1870 (percentages of the whole cohort).

Age	Lost	Deceased	Migrated abroad	In observation at end of period
1830				
0-10	0.3	19.7	0.2	79.8
10-20	0.5	5.5	0.8	73.0
20-30	1.1	9.2	1.2	61.5
30-40	0.6	8.1	2.0	50.8
40-50	0.6	6.9	0.9	42.4
50-60	0.3	5.7	1.5	34.9
60-70	0.1	10.9	0.7	23.2
70-80	-	11.0	-	12.2
80+	-	12.0	-	-
Total	**3.4**	**89.2**	**7.4**	**100.0**
1850				
0-10	0.6	24.3	1.8	73.3
10-20	0.6	4.5	1.5	66.7
20-30	0.6	7.1	2.9	56.1
30-40	0.3	4.7	2.5	48.6
40-50	0.6	3.7	1.5	42.8
50-60	0.2	7.0	0.8	34.8
60-70	-	8.6	0.2	26.0
70-80	-	13.1	-	12.9
80+	-	13.0	-	-
Total	**2.8**	**86.1**	**11.1**	**100.0**
1870				
0-10	0.1	30.7	3.1	66.1
10-20	0.6	2.8	5.1	57.6
20-30	0.6	2.8	6.5	47.7
30-40	0.1	2.3	1.5	43.8
40-50	0.1	3.1	1.5	39.1
50-60	-	4.0	0.1	35.0
60-70	0.2	7.6	-	27.2
70-80	0.2	13.0	-	14.2
80+	-	14.2	-	-
Total	**1.8**	**80.5**	**17.8**	**100.0**

Note: Compare Paping (1999) 79. Each cohort counts 1,080 persons.

APPENDIX B

Large Dutch cities with populations usually above 15,000 and a highly urban character selected for this study.

City	Population 1899	Province
Amsterdam	503,727	North-Holland
Rotterdam	313,524	South-Holland
's-Gravenhage (Den Haag)	204,009	South-Holland
Utrecht	101,464	Utrecht
Groningen	65,977	Groningen
Haarlem	63,726	North-Holland
Arnhem	56,081	Gelderland
Leiden	53,432	South-Holland
Nijmegen	42,112	Gelderland
Tilburg	40,177	North-Brabant
Dordrecht	37,943	South-Holland
Maastricht	32,829	Limburg
Leeuwarden	32,028	Friesland
Delft	31,451	South-Holland
Zwolle	30,420	Overijssel
's-Hertogenbosch	30,109	North-Brabant
Schiedam	27,040	South-Holland
Deventer	26,126	Overijssel
Breda	25,841	North-Brabant
Den Helder	25,100	North-Holland
Enschede	24,005	Overijssel
Gouda	22,019	South-Holland
Zaandam	21,096	North-Holland
Kampen	19,616	Overijssel
Amersfoort	18,990	Utrecht
Middelburg	18,708	Zeeland
Zutphen	18,197	Gelderland
Alkmaar	18,179	North-Holland
Vlissingen	17,708	Zeeland
Assen	11,135	Drenthe

Note: Population based on Volkstellingen.nl. For selection see main text.